

INFORMATION REPORT

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

- 25X1 1. The Czech leather industry is represented by the firm of Bata in Zlin. All other factories, except a few very small ones, have been dissolved and the whole production in Czechoslovakia is under control of Bata.
2. At the end of 1949 Bata employed 25,000 workers, 6,000 of which were in the machinery departments and the rest engaged on boot and rubber production. The monthly output of the boot department is 4,000,000 pairs of shoes of various kinds, including ladies' shoes, slippers, shoes with canvas uppers, etc. In an emergency, Bata could undertake to produce 100,000 pairs of military leather boots a month.
3. Forty percent of the shoe production is earmarked for export, but because of the poor quality export figures and sales on the home market have declined to such an extent that approximately 4,000,000 pairs of shoes were held in storage towards the end of 1949. The poor quality of leather shoes is explained by the fact that the tanning period of hides, which is normally three months, had to be considerably reduced because of a shortage of leather supplies.
4. Czechoslovakia's home production of hides of various kinds covers only 25 percent of her total requirements, and hides to the value of approximately 600,000,000 Czech crowns have to be imported annually. Present supplies suffice for only four months, and there is a permanent shortage of box calf and hardly any goat skin leather (chevraux). Before 1939 most of the box calf leather came from Poland, but under the present trade treaty Poland does not deliver any box calf to Czechoslovakia, preferring to sell it elsewhere for dollars.
5. Russia, Poland, and Hungary do not supply any leather to Czechoslovakia, and hides have to be imported mainly from Argentina in return for Czech machinery and locomotives. Czechoslovakia fears that if other countries started to supply Argentina with the machinery wanted, the import of hides might be reduced to such an extent as to seriously endanger the whole Czech leather industry.

25X1 Comment: The Bata concern is now Svit, and Zlin has been renamed Gottwaldov.

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